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ABSTRACT

Positive approaches to the administration and management of programs for culturally diverse gifted and talented children are suggested. An administrator offers five suggestions for building an atmosphere for culturally diverse gifted students. Teaching dimensions for this population are identified, and curriculum planning and teaching strategies are considered. Strategies are outlined which build on students strengths, such as the preference for physical and visual learning styles rather than aural, and the problem centered rather than abstract centered approach to problem solving. (CL)

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HELP FOR ORGANIZING PRODUCTIVE EXPERIENCES (HOPE) FOR THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE GIFTED AND TALENTED

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HELP FOR ORGANIZING PRODUCTIVE EXPERIENCES (HOPE) FOR THE CULTURALLY DIVERSE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Introduction

Many persons have recently spoken of the need to tap the numerous gifts and talents residing among a group of children who have variously been called culturally disadvantaged and culturally deprived. The most recent designation has been culturally different. However, each of these labels, no matter how honorable their intentions, have all implied that children so designated have something wrong with them - a deficit that must somehow be remedied if they are to enter the ranks of those who are legitimately gifted and talented.

The first purpose of this paper and session is to suggest that these children are not negatively different but positively diverse. Secondly, it emphasizes that their disadvantages are not necessarily deficits. Rather, they are children coming from groups more diverse in their characteristic behaviors and responses than the dominant culture. They are children who will help to give true meaning to the diverse and broadened definition of gifts and talents specified by the 1972 definition published by the United States Office of Education. They are children who should be recognized for their unique talents which can be expressed in any one of the six categories of the definition. They are children who should not continue to be unidentified because of implicitly or explicitly implied disadvantages in on of the categories - the intellectually gifted.

Therefore, this paper introduces the term Culturally Diverse Gifted to mean those children who are gifted and talented but come from more diverse populations than are currently represented by that segment of the dominant

culture which is usually tapped for programs for the gifted. In addition, this paper speaks to the role of the administrator and his responsibility in helping to recognize the culturally diverse gifted, the dimensions necessary for a mutually beneficial learning experience with the culturally diverse gifted and teaching approaches that can help to capitalize on the development of potential among the culturally diverse gifted.

The Implications of Previous Definitions

Various factors affect the discovery and development of unique abilities among children called the culturally diverse gifted. The effects of previous definitions that have been applied to these children by various writers is summarized below.

The terms "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally different" gifted children are most often interpreted to mean Blacks, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans. Despite the noble efforts of those who would suggest that the interpretation be broadened to include the rural poor, women and Asian-Americans, the interpretation has remained. Despite the broadened definition suggested by some (Frost and Hawkes, 1970; Strein and Ysseldyke, 1974; Brickman and Lehrer, 1972; Fantini and Weinstein, 1968; Gowan and Bruch, 1971) which asks us to understand that the terms may include any variety of persons who have not been able to enjoy cultural and educational advantages commensurate with their potentials, the interpretation still stands. Even when some have attempted to separate the two terms - culturally different to mean membership in a culture other than the dominant culture (Sato, 1974) and disadvantaged to refer to populations who are restricted in access to mainstream cultural experiences due to economic disadvantagement (Bruch, 1975) - the interpretation still exists.

As Passow (1972, p. 406) put it

> "Stripped of polemics, the hard nut facts are that the term refers to Blacks, lower social class Caucasians, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans. They are the children who have been faced with the most obstacles in fulfilling their human potential. They are the children of the poor."

Factors Affecting the Identification of the Culturally Diverse Gifted

Beginning in the latter part of the sixties and up to now it has been recognized that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have been the least-well identified children for participation in programs for the gifted and talented. There are many reasons for this - many of which are pretty obvious to all of us. First, consider the definition of gifted and talented. There has been a tremendous effort during this decade to emphasize the fact that giftedness no longer means the narrow concept of superior abilities as measured by an IQ test only. However, narrowness of the definition still persists. Not nearly as much has been done in the other five areas of the USOE's definition (specific academic aptitude, creative and productive thinking, fine and performing arts, leadership and psychomotor) to identify children and to develop programs as there has been in the area of the intellectually gifted. Secondly, when traditional methods of identification are used for gifted programs, the problems that culturally diverse children have with IQ tests, achievement tests, and teacher nominations mitigate againts their being identified for programs for the intellectually gifted in any substantial number. Finally, adequate programs have not been developed for the other talent areas - where some of these children's potentials might be identified - since most programs have been developed for the intellectually gifted.

Given the fact that it is generally agreed that gifted and talented children are found in these populations, the first question became how do we find them. Some measures have been taken to develop identification

procedures that are more appropriate for helping to find them. Identification instruments such as the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, The Abbreviated Binet for the Disadvantaged (ABDA), the Alpha Biographical Inventory, Relevant Aspects of Potential (RAP) and the Stallings Environmentally Based Screen (SEBS) are examples of procedures that have been employed as supplementary measures or as measures to replace reliance on traditional IQ and achievement tests results. Thus, some progress has been made in identifying the Culturally Diverse Gifted.

The important questions now become (1) What is to be done with them once they are found? and (2) How can learning experiences be provided that will help them develop their potential to the fullest?

We have all either read or heard the typical list of characteristics describing children from this background that make the job even more difficult:

(1) Physical and visual learning styles rather than aural

(2) Content centered rather than form centered

(3) Externally oriented rather than introspective

(4) Problem centered rather than abstract centered

(5) Inductive rather than deductive

(6) Spatial rather than temporal

(7) Slow, careful, persevering (in the areas of importance), rather than quick, clever, facile, flexible (Riessman, 1962, p. 266).

Such a feeling of despondency so overwhelms us after a list such as this that we often fail to recognize, as Riessman points out, that these characteristics overlap and seem to form a pattern similar to that found among one type of highly creative person.

Findings such as those cited above tend to be interpreted as deficits rather than as positives despite the expressions of writers and researchers in gifted education. Notable among these has been the writings of Torrance (1972) and his proposals regarding the use of Creative Positives for identifying the gifted disadvantaged.

The theme of this paper emphasizes that positive thinking and actions are the only way to proceed. Answers will be found only when the question asked is stated in the following fashion: "In what ways can we help children from culturally diverse backgrounds who have unique abilities realize their potentials?" Positive approaches to this question are explored in the remainder of this discussion consisting of three parts.

PART I. The Role of the Administrator -- Dr. Allen Fisher

In order for any program within a school to be successful the individual or individuals charged with implementing the desired skills to be learned must be competent in that area. This person (or persons) is normally the classroom teacher. The teacher's responsibility is greatly aided by a strong administrative leadership which comes in many forms.

Teachers as well as administrators have an obligation to "Gifted Education" and to all students in the school who are gifted. Administrators today (Principals, Assistant Principals, Vice Principals, etc.), must be cognizant of the vast ramifications of gifted education, and stand willing to assist teachers in developing even stronger programs than the ones in existence presently.

The identification of minority students as gifted and talented has been a problem. It appears that teachers have been unable to identify gifted minorities in significant numbers. Just as teachers must be "turned on" to gifted education, administrators must be "turned on" to gifted education and the needs of gifted minorities whose cries for help go unheard because they are not identified by most of the evaluative instruments used today.

Large numbers of gifted and talented minorities become frustrated with the education they are receiving. Instead of cultivating their special abilities, they are being educationally "turned off." They become our discipline problems and dropouts.

The increasing number of discipline problems and dropouts suggest that administrators take a closer look and actively participate in solving this problem.

Inservice retraining is a tool utilized by most of today's administrators to increase teachers' knowledge and skills in the various disciplines. Oliva (1976) stated that:

> "Programs for teachers in-service provide the instructional staff with opportunities to expand knowledge and improve skills which have been developed in a rudimentary fashion in the college training program and to achieve new knowledge and develop new skills called for in their teaching assignments."

Identification of gifted and talented minorities depends heavily on the attitudes and values held by teachers of minority groups. Through inservice training administrators can improve their staff's awareness and recognition of gifted and talented students, including gifted minorities.

Many teachers, because of a lack of understanding of minority students, view their aggressiveness negatively most of the time rather than looking at this behavior in terms of its relationship to the behavior of gifted students who are not being challenged to perform commensurate with their potentials.

Torrance (1974) stated, that almost any group of gifted children know and can do many things that teachers do not know and cannot do . . . Children from culturally different groups, especially minority groups, possess skills, concepts, and information that many of their teachers have never had a chance to learn . . . . Again, the more gifted the culturally different child, the

disadvantaged child, the highly affluent child, the more likely there is to be this difference between teachers and students.

The administrator, by providing time and resources for retraining of staff in the area of minority culture awareness, is helping the teacher to become cognizant of the positive aspects of minorities.

The following are examples of steps that can be taken by administrators in building an atmosphere of awareness and commitment to discovering gifts and talents among culturally diverse groups:

(1) ACCEPT

- that gifts and talents are unique expressions of potentials or demonstrations of achievements in many categories instead of the narrow category inhabited by the intellectually gifted.
- that gifted and talented children, whether from culturally diverse backgrounds or not, will deviate upward from the conforming and average behavior of their peers.
- that all children from culturally diverse backgrounds are not deficit in their potential to achieve.

(2) RECOGNIZE

- that the cue to act will come from the administrator's initiativeness in motivating personnel to assume their responsibilities toward the culturally diverse gifted.
- that the directions that his school's program takes is dependent upon the manner in which he orients his personnel to generate and implement objectives that focus on the development of talent potential among the Culturally Diverse Gifted.
- that he must understand that one of the major underlying concepts of

programs for the gifted is to provide them with appropriate in-school opportunities to achieve in the upward manner that their abilities dictate.

(3) PLAN

- to involve people (staff, students, parents, etc.) in the designing of programs for the Culturally Diverse Gifted.
- for the establishment of program priorities for the gifted that include opportunities for the unique expressions or demonstrations of abilities among the Culturally Diverse Gifted.
- to develop means of evaluating the effects of program efforts that focus on the Culturally Diverse Gifted.

(4) DEVELOP

- inservice programs to educate the total staff regarding the gifts and abilities of the Culturally Diverse Gifted.
- curriculum that capitalizes on the potentials of the Culturally Diverse Gifted.
- resources that would aid in program development and implementation specifically designed for the Culturally Diverse Gifted.

(5) INTERPRET

- to staff, parents, and the community a position that reflects the school's goal to find and develop the potential that resides among the Culturally Diverse Gifted.
- his commitment to a position to serve as the facilitator and coordinator of efforts to plan programs that include the Culturally Diverse Gifted.

When a larger number of teacher attitudes become positive toward minority students, it will be an easier task for them to identify gifted

culturally diverse students. This is a real task for administrators with gifted programs in their schools or who anticipate the development of such programs. Helping teachers recognize how to appropriately identify and educate these children is a task that can only be accomplished by and administrator who positively responds to this challenge. He can not do it all alone, but he must be willing to lead the way.

PART II. Developing a Learning Environment: Key Dimensions of HOPE

Ola R. Clinton

In developing appropriate and profitable learning experiences for the culturally different gifted it is necessary to take a hard look at every aspect of the curriculum. This should be done by asking various questions[1] such as:

(1) What are the interests and needs, the motivational forces for learning, the learn-pattern with which these children come to school?

(2) Is it not possible that these children have resources for the educational program which do not depend upon books, or the arts, or intellectual conversations in the home?

(3) May it not be that these children have a deep foundation for educational growth in their day-to-day social experience in urban life?

(4) How can the [program for the gifted] without relinquishing its . . . goals, change its approach so as to take advantage of the true educational potential of these children?

The hope strategy suggests that to answer these questions the situation must be developed to include five dimensions. These dimensions are formed

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[1] Questions adapted from "Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged." U. S. Department of Health, Education, And Welfare, Office of Education, Bulletin, 1963, No. 17.

by four interlocking circles with the most important being the fifth dimension which is defined by the point of interlock of the four circles.

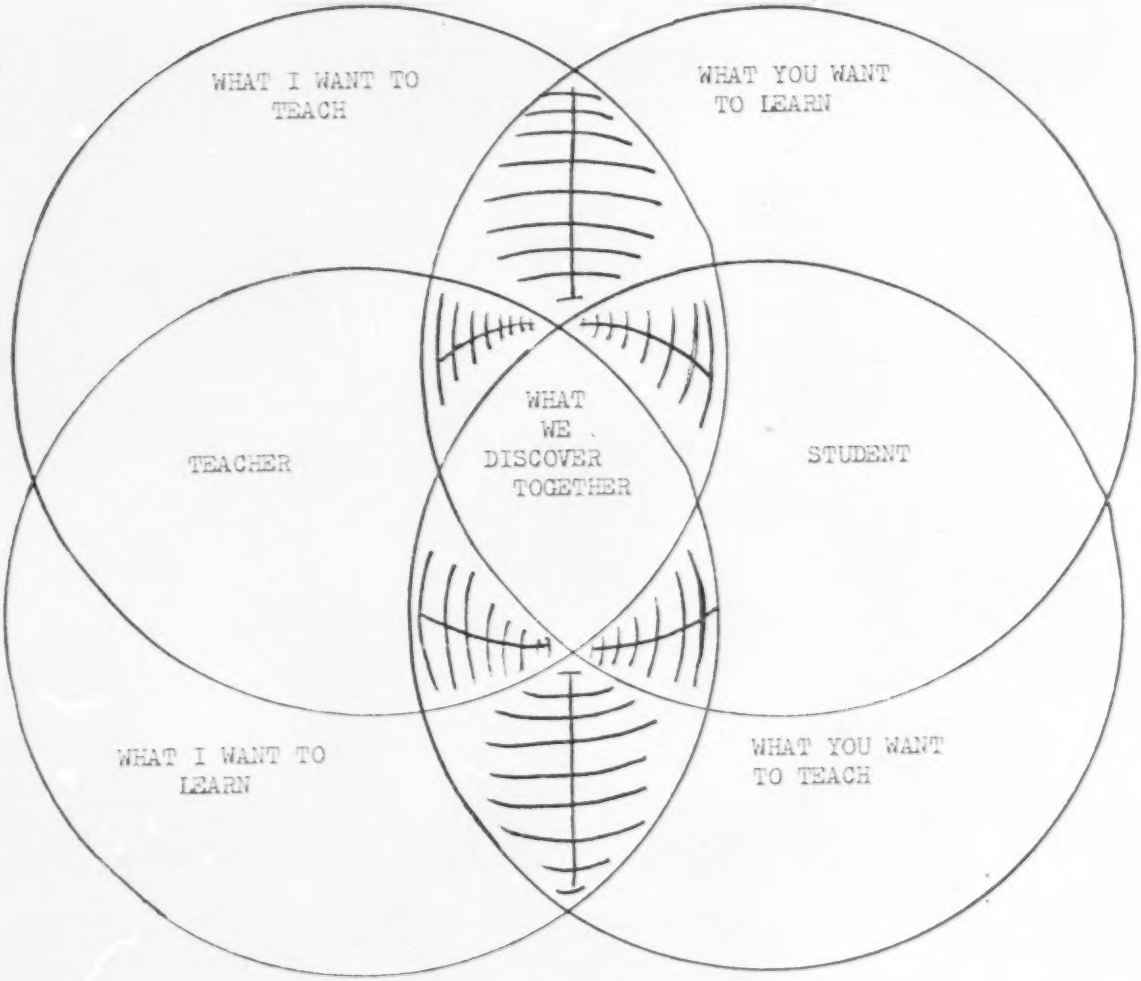

Figure I. KEY DIMENSIONS OF HOPE (This design is adopted from Greer, Mary and Rubinstein, Bonnie. Will the Real Teacher Please Stand Up?- A Primer in Humanistic Education. Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., 1972).

DIMENSION I: What I Want To Teach - the teacher makes some decisions about what to teach based on a diagnosis of strenghts and weaknesses gotten from objective measures and subjective observations. For the Culturally Diverse Gifted, this decision must be based on an awareness of the following:

The Culturally Diverse Gifted Child

(1) Is capable of operating at higher levels of thought (i.e. analysis, synthesis, evaluation)

(2) Needs some time in developing lower level thought processes (i.e. knowledge, comprehension, application)

(3) Exhibits abilities in ways that are not always standard

(4) Needs more initial support in his new opportunities to explore

(5) Needs his strengths emphasized and his weaknesses developed.

DIMENSION II: What I Want to Learn - One step further in making it a truly productive environment for learning is to consider what the teacher can also learn. This implies an openness and a willingness to listen and to learn information presented from the perspective of children, especially the culturally diverse gifted who bring to school nontraditional ways of responding to the environment.

DIMENSION III: What You Want to Learn - This step is an all important one when considered from the learners point of view. It is the taking into consideration, also, of what the learner considers important to him. We must always remember that in the final analysis the intrinsic motivation of the learner must stimulate the learning process and propel it to its highest level.

DIMENSION IV: What You Want To Teach - Even in their youth the learner can also teach. We, in our prime, must maintain the wisdom to recognize that from a young learner we can also learn.

The final and most important dimension is

DIMENSION V: What We Discover Together - Utopia! A mutually benefitting experience. We both learn and grow from our experiences together.

Potentials can be identified and developed among the culturally diverse gifted when we ask "In what ways can we . . .?" instead of stating "Why we cannot!"

PART III. HOPE: Curriculum Planning and Teaching Strategies for the Culturally Diverse Gifted and Talented

This part of the presentation suggests some ways of providing learning experiences for the culturally diverse gifted and talented that emphasize strengths and remediate weaknesses. First, the following points should be kept in mind when planning curriculum for these students.

(1) The fact that a family is economically disabled does not necessarily mean that love and affection do not prevail in the home. The poor ragged child may be rich in love and affection - most significant determinants of school success.

(2) Low-income children do not suffer from sensory deprivation or a lack of stimulation. They are surrounded by sensory stimulation. What they may lack are experiences that have definite educational value and that lay the groundwork for further academic growth.

(3) Ginsburg (1972) suggests in his developmental view that in many fundamental ways poor children's cognition is quite similar to that of middle class children. He says that there are cognitive universals or modes of language and thought shared by all children. There may exist social-class differences in cognition yet these differences are rather superficial. One must not make the mistake of calling them deficiencies.

(4) According to Labov (1968) language is merely one element of a cultural orientation which clashes with the school's values, and it is this conflict, not a deficit language which largely accounts for poor performance in school.

(5) Finally, Ausubel (1964, p. 322) succinctly points out that

"Frequently the best way of motivating an unmotivated

pupil is to ignore his motivational state for the time being and to concentrate on teaching him as effectively as possible. Much to his surprise and to his teacher's, he will learn despite his lack of motivation; and from the satisfaction of learning he will characteristically develop the motivation to learn more.

Following are examples of teaching strategies that can be used to develop strengths of the culturally diverse gifted while at the same time develop skills in areas in which they are weak. Reference is made to the list mentioned earlier where characteristics that typically describe these children were noted.

CHARACTERISTIC: Physical and Visual Learning Styles Rather than Aural

LESSON: Making correct sentences from scrambled sentences

PURPOSE:
1. to form gramatically correct sentences
2. to experiment with the multiple use of words
3. to use correct punctuation marks as the sentence meaning changes.

EXAMPLES: (Each word is placed in big letters on 5 x 8 cards).

1. CAN PLAY BOYS SOCCER ALL TOMORROW
2. AUNT PLAY CAN TENNIS BETH
3. DAVID FIND SLIPPERS HIS HOUSE CAN
4. LIME DOES PIE ETHYL LIKE

DIRECTIONS:
1. Divide students in groups.
2. Have each group form a correct sentence using the scrambled words on the cards.
3. Display the cards in a correct order.

(Note: Students can be further queried regarding capitalizations and punctuations).

EXAMPLES OF SOLUTIONS:

David can find his house slippers.
Can David find his house slippers?
David Slippers can find his house.
David House can find his slippers.
David, fin his house slipper's can.
Etc.

SOME POSSIBLE RESULTS:

1. Each group is spurred on in a healthy sense of competition to be the first to finish with a grammatically correct sentence.

2. As each group views the answers of the other, they will usually accept the challenge to form a more complex sentence. This often leads to using words in ways that they are not normally used.

3. The students participate physically and visually in the exercise. They are not tied down to a work sheet or activities where they must perform by themselves.

4. Exercises such as this capitalize on student's ability to articulate his thoughts and develop new and unusual word meanings.

5. By working in groups rather than alone, students are given the opportunity to use the strengths of the group (culturally disadvantaged or culturally diverse children are said to be group oriented).

EXTENSION:

1. An activity such as this can be expanded to develop practice in organizing sentences into paragraphs.

2. Students can make up their own sentences for scrambling (the joy of learning overshadows the practicing of a valuable skill).

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CHARACTERISTIC: Problem centered rather than abstract centered

LESSON: Learning to recognize compound words

PURPOSE:

1. To learn to recognize compound words

2. To practice purposeful reading

3. To emphasize the development of selective attention to relevant stimuli.

EXAMPLE:

Story Title - The Littlest Jackson from Ebony Jr!, March 1975, pp. 29-32.

Directions - When two words are put together to form one word, it is called a compound word. Underline all the compound words in this story and then write the two words which make up each compound in the space below.

EXTENSION: This story contains many examples of areas of interest that could be explored according to the interest of the student. Some examples are:

1. Astrology
2. Nutrition
3. A study of various kinds of food and the country or nationality with which they are associated,e.g. soul food, tacos, etc.
4. How to become a rock star.
5. Famous families in show business

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CHARACTERISTIC: Externally oriented rather than introspective

LESSON: Decision Making Skills for Life Planning (DLP)

PURPOSE: A very wise person one said -

"I lived half my life before I found out it was a do it yourself job."

Culturally diverse gifted and talented children are often very keenly aware that life is ultimately a do-it-yourself job. However, their lives are often void of opportunities to practice making the kind of decisions that would allow them to fully use their potential. They also often lack the direcions that would help them develop awarenesses of prerequisite steps necessary to develop long range goals. They don't have unrealistic aspirations. They can delay gratification. But, they do need help in accomplishing goals for which their environments offers no readily available or accessible model.

DESCRIPTION OF DEMONSTRATION:

Decision-Making Skills for Life Planning (Frasier, 1974) is a counseling program developed to assist disadvantaged

adolescents in acquiring effective strategies for making decisions. It is process oriented rather than product oriented. The student decides for himself his goal(s) and plans for the implementation of these goal(s) during the period of a year. The program consists of the following steps:

STEP	QUESTION
Defining	Who am I?
Deciding	Where do I want to go?
Planning	How can I get there?
Evaluating	How well am I following through on my commitment to myself?

The students are introduced to the program with a slide presentation entitled "ONLY YOU CAN MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE." Following this, a discussion poem, "A DREAM DEFERRED" by Langston Hughes is used to stimulate discussion and thought about the possible fate of dreams.

The next steps involve the students going through the following activities:

1. An analysis of present decision-making status
2. Self Appraisal
   a. A self analysis of wishes, beliefs and values
   b. A self description of the kind of person he is
   c. A self description of the kind of person he would like to be
3. Planning exercise
4. Plans in action exercise
5. Follow-up sessions

(A copy of this program complete with exercises may be secured from the author at the following address: Dr. Mary M. Frasier
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SUMMARY

It is hoped that this presentation has alerted you to some examples of positive approaches that can be used when working with the Culturally Diverse Gifted. If we are to be serious about tapping the talent potential of culturally diverse children, then we must begin to approach the task by posing the question that will open our mind to find solutions - "In what ways can I develop the talent potential of the culturally diverse gifted?"

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I AM SOMEBODY!

The culturally diverse gifted says it to you through his special abilities in the intellectual and specific academic categories.

I AM SOMEBODY!

The culturally diverse gifted says it to you through his unique abilities in the fine and performing arts.

I AM SOMEBODY!

The culturally diverse gifted says it to you through his ability to think creatively and productively.

I AM SOMEBODY!

The culturally diverse gifted says it to you as he exhibits his unique abilities in the psychomotor and leadership areas.

This poem by Abelardo Delagado[2] challenges us all to recognize that they are indeed SOMEBODY!

stupid america, see that chicano
with a big knife
on his steady hand
he doesn't want to knife you
he wants to sit on a bench
and carve christfigures
but you won't let him.

stupid america, hear that chicano
shouting curses on the street
he is a poet
without paper and pencil
and since he can not write
he will explode.

stupid america, remember than chicanito
flunking math and english
he is a picasso
of your western states
but he will die
with one thousand masterpieces
hanging only from his mind.

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